

ZONING CHANGE REVIEW SHEET

CASE NUMBER: C14H-07-0021

HLC DATE:

September 24, 2007

PC DATE:

October 23, 2007

APPLICANT: City of Austin

HISTORIC NAME: Gordon Damon House

WATERSHED: Waller Creek

ADDRESS OF PROPOSED ZONING CHANGE: 3400 Duval Street

ZONING FROM: SF-3-NCCD-NP

TO: SF-3-H-NCCD-NP

SUMMARY STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends the proposed zoning change from single family residence, neighborhood conservation neighborhood plan combining district (SF-3-NCCD-NP) to single family residence, neighborhood conservation, neighborhood plan – Historic (SF-3-H-NCCD-NP) combining district zoning.

HISTORIC LANDMARK COMMISSION ACTION: Recommended the proposed zoning change from single family residence, neighborhood conservation neighborhood plan combining district (SF-3-NCCD-NP) to single family residence, neighborhood conservation, neighborhood plan – Historic (SF-3-H-NCCD-NP) combining district zoning. Vote: 6-0 (Cuppett absent, Bunton and Mather off dais).

PLANNING COMMISSION ACTION: Recommended the proposed zoning change from single family residence, neighborhood conservation neighborhood plan combining district (SF-3-NCCD-NP) to single family residence, neighborhood conservation, neighborhood plan – Historic (SF-3-H-NCCD-NP) combining district zoning. Vote: 9-0.

DEPARTMENT COMMENTS: The Gordon Damon House is listed in the Comprehensive Cultural Resources Survey (1984) but without a priority ranking for research.

CITY COUNCIL DATE: November 29, 2007

ACTION:

ORDINANCE READINGS: 1ST 2ND 3RD

ORDINANCE NUMBER:

CASE MANAGER: Steve Sadowsky

PHONE: 974-6454

NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION: North University Neighborhood Association

BASIS FOR RECOMMENDATION:

The ca. 1921 Gordon Damon House is an excellent example of a bungalow and is associated with Gordon Damon, a prominent professor of geology at the University of Texas.

Architecture:

One-story, rectangular-plan front-gabled frame bungalow with a wraparound inset porch on battered posts and brick piers; single, paired, and triple 9:1 fenestration; side-gabled bay on the right side of the main house is composed of walls of 9:1 windows.

The ca. 1921 Gordon Damon House is one of the city's finest examples of a bungalow, with its low-slung roof, horizontal composition, banks of windows, prominent front porch, and organic setting.

Historical Associations:

Professor Henry G. Damon (1883-1960) was the son of Confederate war hero Henry G. Damon; the family was listed as living in Corsicana, Texas in the 1910 U.S. Census. Damon's father died in 1916; Mrs. Margaret Damon and the children had moved to this house in Austin by 1927. Professor Damon taught geology at the University of Texas and was noted for his studies in geological sedimentation as applied to the development of Texas oilfields, teaching the first specialized classes in sedimentation at the University. Towards the end of his life, Professor Damon lived in this house with his sister Eleanor Pace, who is listed as the owner and occupant in the 1967 city directory.

Although the house may have been built as early as 1918 by Washington Harper (who developed Washington Square west of Guadalupe Street), the address is not listed in city directories until 1922, when the owner and occupant is listed as James and Alma Brown. Brown operated a dry goods store at 202 E. 6th Street. William and Maude Allison are listed as renters of the house in 1924 and 1927; he was a prominent cotton broker. From 1927 through the late 1960s, the house was owned and occupied by members of the Damon family; Margaret Damon, the widow of a Confederate war hero, purchased the house for herself and her son Henry Gordon Damon (1883-1960), who was an instructor in geology at the University of Texas. Gordon Damon rose through the ranks of the department, achieving full professorship in geology by the early 1940s, and was noted for his studies in geological sedimentation as applied to the development of Texas oilfields, and taught the first specialized classes in sedimentation at the University. Towards the end of his life, Professor Damon lived in this house with his sister, Eleanor Pace, who is listed as retired in the 1967 city directory.

PARCEL NO.: 02170607140000

LEGAL DESCRIPTION: Lot 1 and the South 15 Feet of Lot 2, Block 9, W.A. Harper's Resubdivision of Block 9, Grooms Addition

ANNUAL TAX ABATEMENT: \$5,599 (owner-occupied); city portion: \$1,362

APPRAISED VALUE: \$463,638

PRESENT USE: Residence

CONDITION: Excellent

PRESENT OWNERS

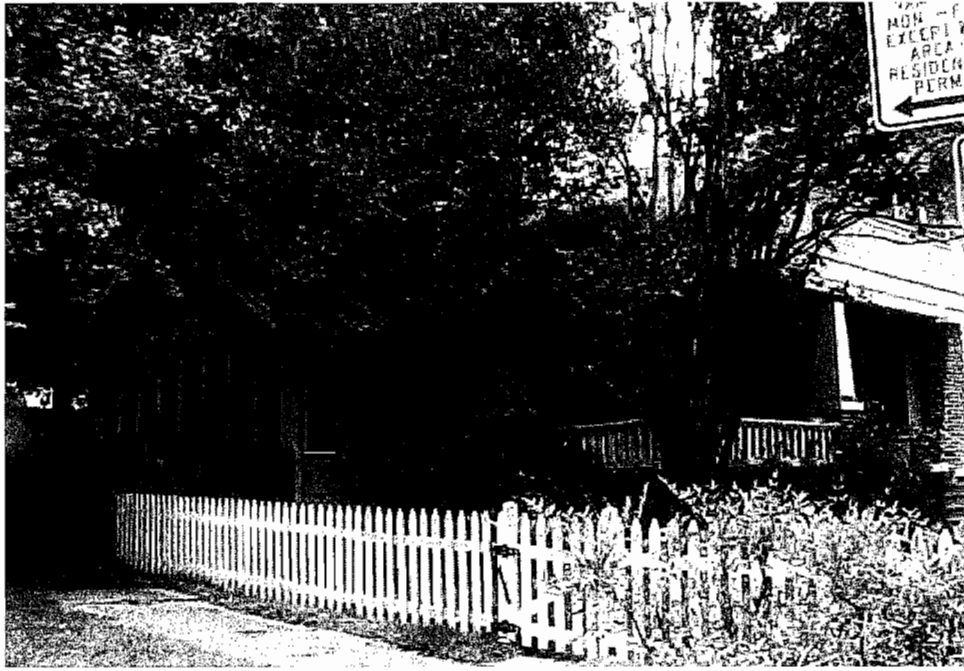
Steven and Kimberley Brackin
3400 Duval Street
Austin, Texas 78705

DATE BUILT: ca. 1921

ALTERATIONS/ADDITIONS: None

ORIGINAL OWNER(S): James and Alma Brown (1921)

OTHER HISTORICAL DESIGNATIONS: None.



Gordon Damon House
3400 Duval Street
ca. 1921



OCCUPANCY HISTORY

OCCUPANCY HISTORY 3400 Duval Street

City Directory Research, Austin History Center
By City Historic Preservation Office
August, 2007

1987	Vacant
1977	Nick and Shirley Phelps, owners Music teacher
1967	Eleanor D. Pace, owner Widow, Steve Pace Retired
1957	H. Gordon Damon, owner Associate professor, University of Texas
1953	H. Gordon and Margaret Damon, owners Professor, University of Texas
1949	H. Gordon and Maggie R. Damon, owners Associate professor, University of Texas
1947	H. Gordon Damon, Jr., owner Teacher, University of Texas Also listed is Maggie R. Damon, the widow of H. Gordon Damon, no occupation given.
1944-45	Margaret Daman (not listed as owner) Widow, H.G. Daman No occupation listed Also listed is Henry G. Damon, a professor at the University of Texas
1942	Margaret R. Damon, owner Widow, H.G. Damon No occupation listed Also listed is Henry G. Damon, an assistant professor at the University of Texas.
1940	Mrs. Margaret R. Damon, owner Widow, Henry G. Damon No occupation listed Also listed is Henry G. Damon, an assistant professor at the University of Texas.
1937	Mrs. Maggie R. Damon, owner Widow, Henry G. Damon No occupation listed Also listed is Henry G. Damon, an assistant professor at the University of Texas.
1935	Mrs. Maggie R. Damon, owner Widow, Henry G. Damon No occupation listed Also listed is Henry G. Damon, an adjunct professor at the University of Texas.

1932-33	<p>Mrs. Maggie R. Damon, owner Widow, Henry G. Damon No occupation listed Also listed is Henry G. Damon, an adjunct professor at the University of Texas.</p>
1930-31	<p>Mrs. Margaret R. Damon, owner Widow, Henry G. Damon No occupation listed Also listed is Gordon Damon, a teacher, and Henry G. Damon, an adjunct professor at the University of Texas.</p>
1929	<p>Mrs. Margaret R. Damon, owner Widow, Henry G. Damon No occupation listed Also listed is Henry G. Damon, an instructor at the University of Texas.</p>
1927	<p>Mrs. Margaret Damon, owner Widow, Henry G. Damon No occupation listed Also listed is Henry G. Damon, an instructor in Geology at the University of Texas.</p> <p>William E. and Maude Allison, renters No occupation listed</p>
1924	<p>William E. and Maude K. Allison, renters President-manager, W.E. Allison Company, cotton brokers, 114 ½ W. 6th Street.</p>
1922	<p>James L. and Alma H. Brown, owners Dry goods, 202 E. 6th Street</p>
1920	<p>Address not listed.</p>

IN MEMORIAM

HENRY GORDON DAMON

Dr. Henry Gordon Damon, member of the faculty of the Department of Geology of The University of Texas for 35 years, died in Austin on February 3, 1960. Dr. Damon retired from active teaching in 1957 but he enjoyed good health and was in his office nearly every day until he suffered a heart attack in early January which claimed his life a month later.

Gordon was born at Corsicana, Texas, April 12, 1883, the eldest of three children born to Henry Gordon Damon and Margaret Houston Rogers Damon. He is survived by a sister, Dr. Eleanor Damon Pace, of Austin, Texas, with whom he lived. Gordon came from pioneer stock, being a grandson of Colonel William P. Rogers of the Second Texas Regiment C.S.A., a hero of the battle of Corinth (1862). His father, a Confederate veteran, was a lawyer in Corsicana and active in the oil developments at Corsicana in 1895, which was the first oil production of any consequence in Texas.

Gordon's early education was in the Corsicana Public Schools and Baylor University Preparatory School, but on account of poor health he was rarely able to complete a school term. He entered Baylor University in 1901 but was not able to finish the term because of his health. His doctor ordered a change in climate and in 1902 Gordon transferred to Vanderbilt University, graduating with a B.S. degree in 1906.

After graduating from Vanderbilt, Gordon taught school for one year at Macgdoches and then studied law at The University of Texas in 1907-1908. He received a license to practice law in 1908 and for the next nine years he practiced law in Corsicana. However, he continued to be troubled with a stomach ailment and was under the care of a physician much of the time. His doctor felt that he should give up the practice of law and seek some work that would be less confining. Gordon decided to try teaching again and in 1917-1918, he taught physics, chemistry, biology and mathematics at La Grange High School; in 1918-1919, he taught similar courses in Austin High School, and in 1919-1920, he taught physics, chemistry and general science at the San Antonio Military Academy. For the next four years (1920-1923) Gordon was with the State Department of Education as Supervisor of Science. This position required him to visit the high schools of the state to determine whether the work in science was acceptable for accreditation. His health did not improve and his doctor advised him to seek work which would take him outdoors. It was at this point that Gordon decided to take up geology. He had some acquaintance with the subject because as early as the summer of 1919, Gordon, along with the writer, was a member of a field course in Geology given by The University of Texas in the Llano region under the direction of Dr. H. P. Bybee. He entered the graduate school of The University of Texas in the fall of 1923 and received the Master of Arts degree in geology, in 1924. His thesis, under the supervision of Dr. H. P. Bybee, was entitled: "The vertical displacement in the main fault of the Balcones fault system at a point west of the City of Austin, Texas." Prior to 1924, only 5 Master's degrees in geology had been granted by The University of Texas. In 1924, two more were added to the list: Gordon Damon and A. K. Tyson. Gordon's first teaching in the Department of Geology, The University of Texas, was in 1924-1925, when he taught laboratory sections of General Geology under an appointment as a Tutor in Geology.

In 1925, he was appointed to an instructorship and served continuously on the faculty until his death, advancing to Assistant Professor in 1931 and to an Associate Professorship in 1943. Gordon's chief contribution to the Department during the early years of his tenure was in the organization of the laboratory work in General Geology. Firmly convinced that the laboratory work was a very important part of a course in General Geology, he organized the material, planned field trips, prepared a manual which was used for many years, and trained the instructors who were assigned to teach the various laboratory sections.

Gordon's chief interest in geology was in sedimentation and he decided to complete his doctorate in this field. Selecting the University of Iowa, one of the leading schools in sedimentation, Gordon entered the graduate school in 1930 and in the year following completed the residence requirements for the doctorate, while also serving as a Teaching Fellow. His dissertation was a study of the basal Cretaceous conglomerates on the east side of the Llano uplift in Central Texas. He devoted several summers to the field and laboratory work on this problem and was awarded the Ph.D. degree by the University of Iowa in 1940.

The discovery of the East Texas oil field in the early 30's and other stratigraphic-trap type fields increased interest in sedimentation and there was a demand for specialized courses in this field. Dr. Damon organized and taught the first course in sedimentation to be given at The University of Texas in 1939-40. Other courses were added and by 1946 Dr. Damon was teaching two senior and one graduate course in sedimentation which he continued to do alone through 1951. Finally the load became too heavy for one man and Dr. Robert Folk was added to the staff and together they handled the teaching and graduate research in sedimentation until his retirement.

Dr. Damon was primarily a teacher although he was interested in research and always had several projects under way. However, his main contribution to research was through his students in the aid and direction of their research projects. Exceptions to this were the several summers he spent working on the tripoli and glass sand deposit of North Central Texas for the Bureau of Economic Geology (see bibliography).

The professional and scientific organizations of which Dr. Damon was a member include: American Association of Petroleum Geologists, Society of Economic Paleontologists and Mineralogists, Fellow of the Texas Academy of Science, Texas State Teachers Association, Sigma Xi, and Sigma Gamma Epsilon. His social fraternity was Sigma Nu. He is listed in the American Men of Science. He was an active member of the University Baptist Church and regularly attended many of the church functions.

Dr. Damon was a lover of music and with his sister, Dr. Pace, attended almost every musical event on the campus and regularly went to San Antonio for the opera. He also enjoyed traveling and recording his trips with colored pictures. Gordon was a very modest individual, so few people knew that he wrote from time to time short humorous poems (some about his students), and many brief fictional stories or anecdotes about some of his experiences. In particular he was interested in the adventures of his father while he was fighting for the Confederacy, and wrote several stories about Civil War and Reconstruction days.

Dr. Damon was a quiet, scholarly person with firm convictions and always ready to defend his viewpoint. He was painstaking in the organization of his work and research, and kept up with the scientific literature by faithfully abstracting and cross-indexing most articles in his field until his last few months. He insisted that his students be equally well prepared and his favorite course was chiefly concerned with seeing that the students kept up with recent research by reviewing scientific articles for class discussion. His main interests in sedimentation were environments of deposition, processes of sedimentation, and heavy mineral studies. In his heavy mineral course, he insisted that the students work out properties and identify the minerals themselves, feeling rightly that the students learned more by working individually rather than being flatly told what the mineral was. Consequently, Dr. Damon interested many students in going further into the field of sedimentation. He was quick to give encouragement and individual help to deserving students but impatient with those careless in their work. Perhaps his greatest success lay in the personal aid he gave to his students and they all speak affectionately of the encouragement he gave them and the interest he showed. He went so far as to make a careful card-index of even the students he advised from year to year and kept a record of their progress. On reunion days he was sure to be visited by many former students for long chats. In his long teaching career at the University of Texas, Dr. Damon came in contact with many students and among these he has a host of friends who will remember him as a fine teacher, a person dedicated to his subject, and a scholarly gentleman.

Fred M. Bullard, Chairman
S. P. Ellison
H. H. Power

Publications of Henry Gordon Damon

1922. The teaching of science in Texas High Schools: Bull. 136, Department of Education, State of Texas.
1940. (with Gordon R. McNutt) Cretaceous in the vicinity of Austin: Excursions 1 and 2, 53rd Annual Meeting, Geological Society of America, pp. 3-15.
1940. Cretaceous conglomerates on the east side of the Llano uplift, Texas (abstract): Iowa University publ. Aims and progress of research, series 66, Jan. 23, 1940.
1946. The origin and distribution of spiculite near Lampasas, Lampasas County, Texas: University of Texas publication 4301, pp. 271-282.
1952. Glass sands of the Trinity group in North-central Texas: Open file, Bureau of Economic Geology, University of Texas.

Filed with the Secretary of the General Faculty by Mr. Fred M. Ballard, Chairman of the Henry Gordon Damon Memorial Committee, May 26, 1960.

Distributed among the members of the General Faculty by the University Stenographic Bureau, June 6, 1960.

3400 Duval- Harper/Damon House

In 1914, Dr. W.A. Harper re-subdivided block 9 of the Grooms addition where he built the bungalow style house (3400 Duval) in 1918. In 1924, he and his wife, Perle, sold the house to Gordon Damon, Margaret Damon (Gordon's mother), and Elenor Pace (Gordon's sister who was a widow).

Gordon Damon had just graduated from The University of Texas with a Masters Degree in Geology. Prior to 1924, only 5 Masters degrees in geology at UT had ever been awarded; Gordon Damon taught in the Geology Department at UT from 1924-25. In 1925, Gordon Damon was appointed to an Instructorship where he served for 35 years until his death. (His career included an appointment to Assistant Professor in 1931, then to Associate Professor in 1943. Professor Damon's chief contribution to Geology during the early years was in the organization of the lab work in general geology. Firmly convinced that laboratory work was a very important part of the course works in general geology, Damon organized materials, planned field trips, prepared useful manuals (used for many years), and trained instructors who were assigned to teach various laboratory sections. Since Professor Damon's chief interest in Geology was sedimentation, he pursued a Ph.D. from the University of Iowa, which he completed in 1940. Dr. Damon retired from teaching in 1957; he died from heart failure on February 3, 1960.

His mother, Margaret Houston Damon, turned 100 years old in this house, 3400 Duval, on June 15, 1955; she was featured in an article in the Austin American Statesman. The article described the house as a "white frame house." At this point in time, she was the eldest living graduate of Baylor University. She received her "Maid of Philosophy" degree in 1873. The Damon family continued to live in this house for nearly 50 years- until the early 1970s.